



Sierra Vista Salute to the Union

Governor Jan Brewer

Sunday, July 4, 2010

In 1826, a frail old man was invited to Washington, D.C. to help celebrate what was then the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

But, the journey was too far for him, and too painful for someone in such ill health.

He wanted to go, but he simply could not.

So, he sent his regrets, writing that he was saddened to have to miss the rejoicings of the day.

In his letter, he wrote:

"May (the celebration of the Declaration of Independence) be to the world, what I believe it will be ... to assume the blessings and security of self-government ... All eyes are opened, or opening, to the rights of man ... For ourselves, let the annual return of this day forever refresh our recollections of these rights, and an undiminished devotion to them."

Ten days later, on that very day of celebration -- July 4, 1826 -- the frail old man passed away.

He left behind not only his wish that July 4th "forever refresh our undiminished devotion to reason and freedom," but he left behind a document that is at the heart of what we celebrate today.

THOMAS JEFFERSON was that frail old man.

He gave THIS day to us -- you -- me -- our children -- our families -- our friends.

He, and the 55 others who signed the Declaration of Independence, well knew the high cost that liberty demands -- and the painful price we will pay if we should ever fail to preserve it.

And so, on this day that Thomas Jefferson willed to us – blessed by Providence and carrying the promise of free men and women everywhere -- let us pray for the safe return of our servicemen and women – those who are far from home, in cold valleys, in dark trenches, on turbulent oceans, standing watch, protecting us, keeping us safe and keeping us free.

God bless you and your families, God Bless Arizona, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.